

**Stakeholder Meeting  
on the  
Arborway Corridor Route 39 Transit Enhancement Plan**

**Monday, February 25, 2008  
6:00 PM**

**Agassiz School Auditorium  
20 Child Street  
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts**

**Meeting Summary**

**Main Points:**

**General Comments:**

**Comments on Existing Route 39/MBTA service**

- There are other barriers to using the MBTA bus. I often have trouble bringing my service animal on the bus. I suggest that each bus operator receive information on the service animals and the MBTA's policy on them.
- Route 39 should be shown on the MBTA service map because it offers the same regular service as the rapid transit system.
- Bunching of the buses continues to be a problem and many are frustrated that improvements to fix the bunching have not been implemented or are not effective.
- Bunching of buses appears to be a problem even at the start of the routes. It appears that the starters are not doing their jobs.
- Who has responsibility over the drivers?
- What is the status of the intervention system? When will it be implemented?
- Route 39 buses entering Forrest Hills cause gridlock at the final signal along South Street.
- There is a bottleneck at Gainsborough Street outbound
- Drivers should be trained in how to operate safely with bicycles
- There are multiple closely-spaced bus stops in each direction at Brigham Circle.
- Still multiple complaints about bunching of buses. Still need better answers on how to solve this problem. GPS is not the whole solution.

**Comments on Planned Enhancements to Route 39**

- Opposed to removing bus stops, 300 feet is far for elderly/disabled to walk
- When looking at bus stops to remove, MBTA should look at the land uses around each stop for any populations who may need easier access to the bus and not just at the overall spacing of stops.
- Curb extensions are a great idea
- The MBTA should look at alternative ways to design shelters in areas where the traditional shelters cannot fit. One example could be a shelter that cantilevers out over the stop.
- The presentation showed that reducing the travel time along Route 39 by 4 to 6 minutes would be a major improvement. The Belvidere Loop in Back Bay takes approximately 5 minutes. I think that the option of removing this loop should be considered by the CAC.

- The CAC should consider moving near-side stops to the far-side of intersections to achieve a higher benefit from TSP. Also if far-side stops are used, the intersection can be used as part of the distance necessary for the bus drivers to swing into the stops, helping to keep more parking.
- Do the travel time savings shown in the presentation include traffic signal priority (TSP) for the buses?
- Would not mind if the schedule is lengthened, as long as service is reliable.
- Need to establish performance standards, such as increasing ridership, to help evaluate the changes to the Route 39 service.
- Need a bus lane along Huntington Avenue to give the Route 39 priority in the corridor.
- How will the proposed improvements be paid for?  
The Silver Line has many of the same technologies discussed here and it still is often not in compliance with its schedule.
- Need to advertise in the community to help attract riders to public transit, keep cars off the road.  
Please do not install the standard MBTA shelters along the corridor. They are quickly defaced and not cleaned often.
- Need to follow up on some of the points mentioned in the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - MBTA should look at adjustments to the downtown distribution of Route 39
  - Need an origin-destination survey to find out where people are going to and from
- Concerned that reducing travel time will reduce service along Route 39. Need to balance service frequency with travel time.
- The layout of the Forrest Hills Route 39 bus stop needs to be reconfigured for bus service if that is the service that is going to be continued. The cobblestones are a hazard to the buses, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- The rails along the road are a hazard for bicyclists
- Show connections to bike routes on the Route 39 map.
- The concern for this route/corridor has been deeply expressed in Jamaica Plain. We need to bring this information to other neighborhoods along the route so that they are able to express their views.
- Feel that the Route 39 bus serves pockets of ridership. Not sure if it is a cohesive travel pattern or if it would be better served by multiple routes or extensions of routes. We need to know where riders are going to and from.
- One way to help reduce dwell time for the buses would be to have riders exit from the back of the bus while riders board at the front. Another way would be to move to an off-line payment system for the buses.

#### **Comments on Citizen's Advisory Group**

- When will the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) be formed?
- Need clarification of the CAC's purpose. Would it concentrate in improvements to Route 39 or all transit in the corridor (other bus routes, rapid transit)?
- How will the CAC be formed? Who will decide membership?

#### **Green Line/CLF commitment**

- Need to see Green Line service restored to Jamaica Plain.
- Disagree that this meeting meets the CLF commitment
- The MBTA is building a tunnel to help the Silver Line avoid downtown traffic, that is still a drawback to the Route 39 bus service. The Green Line has its own ROW.

- The CLF agreement did not specify only bus improvements, therefore all transit options should be on the table at these meetings. How do you (EOT, MBTA) interpret CLF agreement?
- From the wording of the CLF agreement, because no mode is specifically mentioned, all options should be on the table. One possible way to look at this is, the MBTA is free to propose its ideas for improving transit and air quality –enhancements to Route 39- and the public is free to propose its own as well.

**Comments on general transportation issues in the corridor**

- Improvements to the bus service along Centre Street may work in the short-term, but the long-term solution to the congestion along the corridor would be to make it a one-way street in the most convenient direction.
- The traffic signals around Brigham Circle are not well coordinated and create a troublesome situation for buses and general traffic.
- MBTA and the BTD need to coordinate transportation operations around Forrest Hills station to help relieve some of the congestion in the area.
- The new signal at Fenwood Road is miscoordinated with the other signals at Brigham Circle.
- A state law should be passed requiring vehicles to yield to transit buses entering traffic.
- May be better for public safety to propose legislation making a violation to move past a bus in a one-lane road.